

# 4. Transportation

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## Introduction

Residents of Fort Wayne and Allen County have a variety of vehicular, public and alternative transportation needs. Ideas generated at the public meetings provided a wide assortment of suggestions from paving gravel country roads, to enhancing vehicular movement through downtown Fort Wayne, to providing additional pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and rail options. Transportation planning in Allen County and Fort Wayne is an ongoing process led by the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC), which serves as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Development of this Plan required the use of technical data from NIRCC and various transportation providers, coupled with community input. The goal, objectives and strategies discussed within this chapter are closely aligned and compatible with the existing transportation plan developed by NIRCC.

## Overview

This chapter outlines the recommendations for addressing transportation in Allen County and Fort Wayne, and is organized in the following sections:

- Policy Foundation of the Plan;
- Key Findings;
- Goal; and
- Objectives and Strategies.

## Policy Foundation of the Plan

The foundation of the Plan was shaped by an extensive community involvement and planning process (see Executive Summary). The Comprehensive Plan has three key layers of policies: goals, objectives and strategies. Goals are the broadest policy statements that state a desired outcome in general terms. Objectives indicate a more specific policy direction and help organize strategies. Strategies are detailed actions necessary to initiate or complete an objective – such as a program or project. There are multiple objectives for each goal and multiple strategies for each objective. The recommendations for each element of the Plan contain all three policy layers.

Other plans and studies completed prior to the preparation of this Plan and relevant to the Transportation Chapter include:

- Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, *2030 Transportation Plan Technical Report*, 2005;
- The Fort Wayne – Allen County Airport Authority, *Fort Wayne International Airport Master Plan Update*, 2003;
- Citilink and Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, *Citilink Transportation Development Plan*, March 2004;
- Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, *Coordinating Development and Transportation Services, A Guide for Developers, Engineers, and Planners*, 2002;
- Aboite New Trails, *New Trails/Aboite Township Walkways and Shared Use Paths*, October 2003;
- City of New Haven, *City of New Haven Comprehensive Trails and Pedestrian Walkways Master Plan*;
- City of Fort Wayne, *Transportation Capital Improvement Plan*;
- Fort Wayne, New Haven, Allen County: *Access Standards Manual*;
- Northern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council, *Frontage Road Proposal*;
- American Association of Highway & Transportation Officials, *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*;

- Urban Transportation Advisory Board, *Roadway Design Standards*;
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, *A Guide for Achieving Flexibility in Highway Design*, May 2004;
- Fort Wayne Park Board, *Fort Wayne Parks Master Plan*;
- City of Fort Wayne, *Greenway Consortium Trails Plan*; and
- Allen County, *Allen County Parks Master Plan*.

## Key Findings

### **Vehicular Transportation**

Fort Wayne and Allen County have good connections to interstate highway systems that tie the area to major cities in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky and beyond. As a result, this is a prime area for truck freight movement. While there are minor congestion issues, the area is relatively free of the severe traffic congestion often found in larger urban areas. Current trends in population and land use indicate that travel patterns will likely become less oriented to the urban core, and more dependent on suburb-to-suburb connections. Future transportation planning decisions will need to take the issue of air pollution into account. Another challenge involves the need to develop context-sensitive roadways that adequately serve new housing, commercial and industrial developments peripheral to Fort Wayne, and integrate the community's character.

### **Public Transportation**

Citilink is the public transportation provider for the Fort Wayne area. Since 1999, Citilink has experienced a significant increase in bus ridership, and it has plans to substantially enhance current service levels. Citilink offers a number of flexible transportation options, including: fixed bus routes; Flexlink routes that can deviate off the standard service routes upon request; and Citilink Access, a complementary demand-response van service for people with disabilities. Several other transportation agencies such as Community Transportation Network (CTN) and Allen County Council on Aging provide and/or coordinate paratransit services for individuals throughout the County. Another significant transportation facility is the Fort Wayne International Airport, which is anticipating steady and significant increases in passenger and cargo operations. As of 2005, Amtrak serves the Northeast Indiana region via its Waterloo, Indiana platform for passenger service and is exploring the possibility of a high-speed rail line from Chicago to Cleveland that will pass through Fort Wayne.

### **Alternative Transportation**

Many parts of Fort Wayne and Allen County lack the necessary infrastructure for safe and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian movement. Providing additional sidewalks, trails and bike paths; promoting multimodal transportation design; and instituting appropriate land use and development codes could greatly expand alternative transportation options. Due to northeast Indiana's concentration of plain sect communities like the Amish, transportation options in applicable rural areas should also safely accommodate horse-drawn buggies. The Fort Wayne Greenway provides nearly 20 miles of hiking and biking trails along the area's three rivers. While the Greenway is in need of maintenance and protection, it serves as an excellent spine from which to create additional bikeways, pathways, trails and/or greenway expansions. As trail development is planned there should be efforts made to coordinate safety issues with various safety agencies in the County.

## Goal

The following goal for transportation was developed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee based upon citizen input:

*An integrated transportation system that ensures accessibility, safe and efficient movement and connectivity through all parts of the County and region, and accommodates a range of transportation choices such as public and paratransit, high-speed rail, pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and horse-drawn.*

## Objectives and Strategies

Outlined below are objectives and strategies to support transportation improvements in Allen County and Fort Wayne.

### **OBJECTIVE T1. IMPROVE VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION THROUGHOUT THE REGION WHILE ACCOUNTING FOR AIR QUALITY STANDARDS AND NOISE MITIGATION.**

While Allen County and Fort Wayne have an adequate road system, population changes and environmental issues represent challenges for future vehicular travel. Outward-moving population trends are increasing the number of vehicle miles traveled, as well as the potential for congestion on roads with inadequate capacity. The region's designation as a nonattainment maintenance area for ozone pollution means that future transportation and land use decisions must account for pollution reduction. Communities have also expressed an interest in taking steps to limit highway noise. The following strategies provide recommendations for improving vehicular and other modes of transportation throughout the region by enhancing the efficiency and connectivity of the road network.

#### **T1.A Continue to support cooperation and coordination among local, regional, state and federal transportation authorities to identify and fund priority projects.**

As an important hub for northeast Indiana, transportation decisions in Fort Wayne and Allen County have a significant impact on the broader region. Fort Wayne and Allen County planning agencies should continue to work with regional, state and federal transportation authorities through the Urban Transportation Advisory Board (UTAB) and the Northeast Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) to identify priority projects and secure appropriate funding.

#### **T1.B Continue and sustain efforts for new construction/upgrades of U.S. Highway 24 from Interstate 469 to the Ohio state line.**

This project will promote commerce and trade to and from the Port of Toledo. Federal and state agencies have been working with local officials to determine costs and feasibility of this road, and efforts should be maintained until the projected completion date. Allen County and Fort Wayne officials also should take the opportunity to work to adaptively reuse "old" U.S. Highway 24 as a heritage byway with new historical markers and a slower speed limit so bicycles can share the road.

#### **T1.C Develop transportation plans that provides an interconnected road system that connects suburban developments to the urban area and to each other.**

Allen County and Fort Wayne have a radial system of roads, with relatively limited connections between suburban communities. Allen County communities should facilitate the development of an interconnected road system by examining growth trends, land use goals and current road capacities, and use this information to identify key corridors, secure necessary rights-of-way for anticipated future roads, and establish standardized setbacks. These roads should be designed as "complete streets" which move people, instead of just cars by using alternative modes of travel (e.g. transit, walkways, bicycles, etc.).

**T1.D Encourage improved connectivity in new developments.**

When new developments are not well connected with existing neighborhoods they contribute more cars and create greater traffic congestion on collector and arterial roads. When developers are required to integrate new neighborhoods into existing street patterns, sidewalks and trails, and provide a variety of choices for safe movement in and out of the neighborhood, new developments can actually increase connectivity within the region. Fort Wayne and Allen County should encourage well-connected roads and through streets. Options for future connectivity should be considered in new development. Where cul-de-sacs and stub areas already exist, communities should consider plans to extend these streets to improve connectivity when approving adjacent development projects. Likewise, the review of proposed connections should also consider other traffic problems that could develop by interconnecting neighborhoods, namely, vehicular shortcut situations.

**T1.E Revise zoning codes to encourage mixed-use development.**

Mixed-use development can play a role in reducing traffic congestion and vehicle miles traveled. Such development places housing, jobs, retail and services in close proximity to each other, as contrasted with the separate uses or single-use districts required by conventional zoning, giving residents and visitors the option of using alternative or public transportation methods, or traveling fewer miles by car to get from place to place. Allen County and Fort Wayne should revise their zoning codes to support more mixed-use development throughout the County.

**T1.F Ensure that environmental oversight complies with state and federal standards in transportation improvement projects.**

Environmental management and project development principles should be integrated into all routings and programs to support the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Transportation improvements and programs should be planned, developed and implemented in a holistic approach that balances natural and physical environmental values. This approach would include drainage, air and water quality, lighting, wetlands and mosquito protection within adjacent watersheds.

**T1.G Work with the Indiana Department of Transportation to encourage beautification projects at existing interchanges that are compatible with the type of interchange and existing and proposed land uses.**

Interchanges play an important role as gateways into our community, and as such special attention should be paid to how they look. Beautification efforts that take into consideration the type of interchange, along with existing and proposed land uses in the vicinity of the interchange, should be encouraged.

**T1.H Ensure that zoning adjacent to existing and planned interchanges is compatible with interchange type and considers existing land uses in the immediate vicinity.**

New interchanges are a draw for new development. Approvals for rezonings and new development projects at interchanges should be compatible with the type of interchange and existing land uses in the immediate vicinity. Ensuring that this occurs requires coordination between planning agencies and state and local transportation agencies when considering rezoning and new development proposals.

**T1.I Investigate planning solutions that mitigate the impact of highway noise on residential communities.**

Noise from interstate highways and other major roads is a common concern among Fort Wayne and Allen County residents. Planning regulations can be implemented in order to mitigate the impact of highway noise on residential communities. In the case of new development, this may involve the use of buffer zones, so that more intensive uses (industrial, commercial) are placed next to the highway and residential uses are further away. In the case of existing residential communities, sound mitigation options such as earth berms and vegetative buffers should be explored. The impacts of noise barrier (sound wall) policies for new and existing developments should be examined.

**T1.J Consider access-management techniques to improve safety and service levels along roadways.**

Through access-management techniques, the City and County can improve safety with roadway improvements to reduce the number of vehicle crashes, as well as improve the level of service along roadways. Education, signage enforcement and various engineering solutions should also be considered to mitigate accidents on highly traveled corridors.

**T1.J Investigate and monitor the need to upgrade gravel roads in developing areas.**

The need for upgrading gravel roads is particularly apparent in the parts of Allen County that are experiencing significant population growth. While paving and widening gravel roads can represent a substantial cost, many of the benefits resulting from an upgrade can help offset that cost. These benefits include a reduction in the ongoing maintenance required by a gravel road, a reduction in dust, creation of a smoother surface that improves multimodal (including vehicular) efficiency, safety, drainage improvements, redistribution of traffic and a potential increase in the tax base. Local agencies should work with developers to ensure upgrades in a coordinated fashion.

**T1.K Encourage context-sensitive design in the development of roadway improvement projects.**

According to *A Guide for Achieving Flexibility in Highway Design* produced by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials in May 2004, the use of context-sensitive design solutions in transportation project design can help to better integrate roadway improvement projects into the community resulting positive impacts beyond its traffic or transportation function. It accomplishes this through an interdisciplinary citizen-based approach which equally addresses safety, mobility, and preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources.

**OBJECTIVE T2.**

**WORK WITH APPROPRIATE AGENCIES TO EXPAND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES, WITH ATTENTION TO BUS, RAIL AND AIR TRAVEL.**

Public transportation providers in Fort Wayne and Allen County are anticipating substantial increases in ridership, and various expansions have been planned accordingly. The following strategies provide recommendations for ensuring that public transportation initiatives are well planned and are as efficient as possible.

**T2.A Work with Citilink and other local transit and paratransit providers to examine existing bus routes and services in order to resolve potential gaps in service.**

Planning departments should work with transit providers to closely examine the locations of existing public transportation routes and stops to ensure that they meet the needs of major population,

employment and commercial centers. Route scheduling and schedule adherence should also be addressed in order to maximize the convenience of public transportation options. The support in the development of a downtown transit hub will also continue to facilitate improvements in service.

### **T2.B Encourage greater use of various public and para-transit transportation alternatives and explore new public transportation alternatives.**

Public transportation offers numerous benefits to the residents and workers of Fort Wayne and Allen County. Transit increases personal mobility and freedom, particularly for youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities and low-income populations. It stimulates the economy and helps create new jobs. It relieves traffic congestion, and it helps the environment and conserves energy.

### **T2.C Investigate the provision of public and private incentives to increase the use of public transportation.**

Fort Wayne should consider pursuing a variety of incentives to increase public transportation ridership. Citilink should be encouraged to offer more convenient fare structures and payment systems, allowing more frequent riders to save money on individual trips. A “transit benefit” program could be promoted, in which businesses subsidize their employees’ transit fares in exchange for tax benefits. Downtown parking should be priced strategically, and park-and-ride facilities should be constructed at transit stops to encourage transit use and discourage single-passenger car trips. New development at strategic locations (e.g. exiting transit stops, major employment and commercial centers, etc.) along existing and proposed transit routes should be developed in a more compact pattern oriented toward transit to encourage ridership.

### **T2.D Promote development that accommodates viable public transportation options.**

In order to encourage the use of public transportation and reduce automobile traffic, land use and development patterns must encourage higher densities, a mix of uses, and roadway and site design that supports a variety of transit users and providers. Codes and ordinances can be revised to promote infill and direct new development towards appropriate locations and at higher densities to support transit. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) districts/zones should be designated near transit hubs and residential and commercial centers. TOD districts typically have a mix of uses and housing types, are designed for cycling and walking, employ traffic-calming techniques, and make use of shared parking management strategies that reduce the amount of land devoted to parking lots. As this type of development increases, public transit will become more efficient and economical for users as well as providers.

### **T2.E Support efforts to lobby for the Midwest High Speed Rail Initiative, and if the project is approved to serve Fort Wayne and Allen County, plan for infrastructure improvements.**

Fort Wayne is one of several cities that may be served by a 3,000-mile long high-speed passenger rail line that will link nine Midwestern states, known as the Midwest Regional Rail System. In planning for this new system, Allen County and Fort Wayne will need to work with both freight and passenger rail, and other transportation partners in determining the necessary setbacks, rights-of-way, and at-grade improvements that are needed to accommodate this new line. The passenger station for this line will also serve as an important transit hub, and efforts should be made to plan for multimodal connections – including sidewalks, bike paths, bus stops and parking facilities – at this station.

**T2.F Work with the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority to plan for airport expansions.**

Fort Wayne International Airport's 20-year Master Plan incorporates a number of capital improvement projects to accommodate anticipated increases in passenger and cargo services. Expansion efforts will need to account for issues of noise and environmental concerns. New development around Allen County airports should incorporate uses that are compatible with the airport.

**T2.G Protect Allen County airports and proposed airport-expansion areas from incompatible land uses.**

In order to assure that development does not encroach on airport flight zones, specific standards should be incorporated into community development regulations that are compatible with and support federal guidelines. The use of overlay districts should be investigated as a mechanism to protect airport operations and economic viability. Depending on airport characteristics, location and amount of key open space adjacent to airport properties, incompatible land uses may include public assembly/large concentrations of people (number of persons attracted by a use), residential density, intensity of nonresidential development, structure height, hazardous/explosive materials, wildlife hazards, light/glare, air quality and electronic signals.

**OBJECTIVE T3.**

**ENCOURAGE AND PLAN FOR FULLY ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE.**

Allen County communities should expand and enhance alternative, accessible transportation options, so that more residents travel around comfortably and safely without the use of a motorized vehicle. The following strategies address the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and horse-drawn vehicles.

**T3.A Encourage new developments to be pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County should encourage sidewalks within all new developments, as well as the provision of pathways, greenways and trails to connect residents to nearby commercial centers, housing, parks, schools and other institutional areas. When possible, new urban development should provide linkages to any existing or proposed greenways and trails.

**T3.B Work with local transportation agencies to assess existing arterial, collector and local roadways to determine the need for safe pedestrian- and bicycle-compatible improvements in Allen County.**

Many existing roadways should be made more pedestrian and bicycle friendly through the addition of sidewalks, trails, bicycle lanes, crosswalks, good lighting and other amenities. Traffic management and landscaping techniques can also create a safer and more pleasant experience for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**T3.C Develop a community-wide plan for the provisions of sidewalks.**

Public input throughout the development of this plan identified the continued desire for more sidewalks throughout this community. To assure that the construction of new sidewalks occurs in the most appropriate places, a community-wide plan should be developed which identifies areas where linkages are needed. A commitment for the development of sidewalks can then be encouraged at prioritized locations identified in the plan.

**T3.D Work with the Fort Wayne, New Haven and Allen County Parks departments, local transportation agencies, and regional and local greenway and trail organizations to facilitate the expansion of the existing Greenway and proposed area Bicycle–Pedestrian Transportation systems.**

The Greenway provides a system of trails along the St. Mary’s, St. Joseph, and Maumee rivers. It offers a combination of both County and City settings, and provides an excellent way for residents and visitors to explore the region. It serves as a key spine from which additional trails, lanes and paths are proposed. Allen County, Fort Wayne and New Haven parks departments and local transportation agencies should continue to work with the Greenway Consortium and other regional and local greenway and trail organizations to expand and coordinate the development and maintenance of greenways, paths, lanes and trails throughout the County and region.

**T3.E Work with local transportation agencies to establish safe and efficient routes for horse-drawn travel.**

As the population moves outward and car traffic increases throughout Allen County, the roads are becoming less safe for horse-drawn buggies and other nonmotorized forms of transportation. Allen County and Fort Wayne should work to ensure the safety of all forms of transportation through the provision of alternative routes and the regulation of automobile traffic. Safety measures such as reflective markers, speed limit reduction and enforcement, widened shoulders, and provision of additional lanes for nonmotorized vehicles should be pursued as appropriate.

**T3.F Work with community stakeholders to educate the public about the benefits of alternative transportation.**

Alternative transportation infrastructure can generate numerous benefits for a community. Sidewalks, trails and greenways can help to define public spaces and contribute to a sense of community. Recent studies have shown that property values tend to be higher near parks and greenways. When residents make use of alternative transportation options, important environmental and health benefits can also be realized. Fort Wayne and Allen County should undertake efforts to educate the public about the benefits of alternative transportation.

**OBJECTIVE T4.**

**PROVIDE FOR INTEGRATED, INTERCONNECTED MODES OF TRANSPORTATION.**

In order to maximize efficiency, all structures and systems related to moving people and goods must function as a cohesive transportation network. The following strategies offer suggestions on how to create an integrated, multimodal transportation system that meets the needs of everyone who resides, works in and travels through Fort Wayne and Allen County.

**T4.A Encourage the development of rights-of-way that can accommodate all users.**

Multimodal streets accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users, as well as private automobiles. The creation of multimodal streets may involve traffic-calming initiatives, the addition of bicycle lanes and sidewalks, and intersection modifications. Allen County communities should pursue the creation of interconnected, accessible, multimodal streets as a key component of future transportation investments.

**T4.B Ensure that plans for new, large-scale development projects incorporate suitable accommodation for different modes of transportation.**

Improvements made for new, large-scale development projects should include suitable accommodations for different forms of transportation at a variety of commercial, residential and employment centers. Residents and visitors should be able to easily and safely transfer among transit modes at these locations. Park-and-ride facilities, bike racks, bus shelters and benches can be incorporated at these connection points to help facilitate a comfortable transition between different modes of transportation. Current development regulations should be revised to encourage the provision of these facilities.

**T4.C Educate the public to encourage safe road sharing among drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.**

Fort Wayne and Allen County should engage in efforts to inform the public about the nature of road sharing among multiple transportation users. Education campaigns, signage and wayfinding can improve the public's understanding of safety precautions. Where feasible, Fort Wayne and Allen County should pursue infrastructure investments that visually distinguish appropriate paths for different forms of transportation in order to increase the safety of all users.

**T4. D Encourage the acquisition of former railroad rights-of-way for trail usage and utility easements.**

Acquisition of former railroad rights-of-way is a significant opportunity to provide for extension and connection to existing trail systems. Their potential use for utility extension projects may also mean savings in time and project costs over utilizing local street rights-of-way and private easements.

**T4.E Continue to work with high-speed rail advocates and rail freight service providers on the long-term use and enhancement of the community's rail infrastructure.**

By the early 20th century, this community was a railroad town being served by several lines. Passenger rail service ended in 1990, but talks of a high-speed rail system between Cleveland and Chicago still continue. High-speed rail would help diversify the transportation system by bringing another mode of travel to the community. Freight rail is also important to this area with two rail-service providers, Norfolk Southern and CSX.. Fort Wayne is one of the major passing points of Norfolk Southern trains coming from the southern region heading towards Chicago and Detroit. CSX runs two through-freights west of Fort Wayne that originate/terminate at the Piqua Yard.